

Den Abschluß seiner Rede bildet wieder der Hinweis auf *τιμή* und *δῶρα* (604f.):

*εἰ δέ κ' ἄτερ δώρων πόλεμον φθισήνορα δύης,  
οὐκέθ' ὁμῶς τιμῆς ἔσσει πόλεμόν περ ἀλαλκόν.*

Der Gedanke ist hier derselbe, wie 513f. Auf Achills vielsagende Antwort (. . . οὐ τί με ταύτης / χρεὼν τιμῆς· 607f.) und auf sein eigenes Verständnis der Situation im Verhältnis zu Phoinix' Auffassung der Lage können wir hier nicht näher eingehen. Phoinix wollte dem Helden zeigen, was er, wie andere vor ihm, von Ehre gewinnen könnte, falls er sich den Litai zugänglich zeigte.

## The Syntax of Homer's Epithets of Wine

By PAOLO VIVANTE, Montreal

### 1.

Why do nouns have an epithet in Homer? When do they lack it? What reason justifies the presence or absence of an epithet? Is there not a purely linguistic reason (this is to say, a reason founded on perception and expression) which spontaneously prompts this choice?

These questions have hardly ever been put in these terms. And yet the problem is an important one. It carries us right into the heart of poetic expression or of expression *tout court*. Why then has the problem been ignored as far as Homer is concerned, and this in spite of the fact that Homer presents so conspicuous an example of noun-epithet phrases? The reason is that the noun-epithet phrase has usually been regarded as a mere ornamental device, with no further inquiry into any deeper motivation.<sup>1)</sup> Thus the epithets have been taken for granted. No thought has been

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<sup>1)</sup> Thus for Milman Parry the Homeric epithet is 'ornamental' in that it is fixed, traditional, and a versificational device. In point of aesthetics, this perpetuates the old rhetorical view which goes back to Aristototele (*Rhet.* 1406a).

given to the basic fact that the value of the epithet in our case can only be appreciated in relation to the lack of epithet. Any object of perception may be designated either with name plus epithet, or with name only, or with a pronoun, or it can be left quite unnamed and self-understood where the context is sufficient to make clear what it is. We have here various degrees of weight or lightness which correspond to modes of perception: greater or lesser stress is naturally given to a thing's name according to its function and position in a sentence. A poetic style works on these basic differentiations. Moments of natural stress are given their fullest value, moments of abatement are lightly passed over; and facts of grammatical correctness are thus translated into forms of realization.

Such trends are intrinsic to the nature of expression. They suggest that Homer's noun-epithet phrases (and indeed 'formulas' in general) be restored to the study of language in its broadest sense. This should require us to focus on general semantic values, abstracting as much as possible from the notion of a conventional phraseology which is taken for granted.

## 2.

An inquiry of this kind should take into account a complete survey of the various semantic fields which admit the use of epithets. I propose a sample of this approach by taking the meaning 'wine' in Homer.<sup>2)</sup> The choice seems an appropriate one: the word 'wine' occurs some one hundred and twenty times, about half of the instances with an epithet and half lacking it.<sup>3)</sup> We may thus quite naturally posit the question: when and why does wine have an epithet? When and why is the epithet lacking? Is this presence or absence of epithet explainable on grounds of expressive reasons relevant to the sentence?

We are faced with a problem of syntax. I maintain that the presence or absence of the epithet is intimately connected (*a*) with the syntactic function which is most intrinsic to the noun, (*b*) with the distinctness of the sentence in which the noun occurs.

<sup>2)</sup> I deal, essentially, with the word *οἶνος*: for synonyms see n. 13.

<sup>3)</sup> Epithets of wine are *αἶθρον*, *ἐριστάφυλος*, *ἐρυνθρός*, *εὐήνωρ*, *ἡδύποτος*, *ἡδύς*, *μελιηδής*, *μελίφρων*. Such epithets constitute one sole image with 'wine' and have no pointed relevance to the context. Thus *ἀθέσφατος* in Od. 11.61 is no epithet of wine, no more than *πολλός* in Od. 23.305.

A preliminary statistical survey confirms these assumptions. We find that the epithet is most frequent in the accusative, present almost twice as often as it is absent; far less frequent in the dative (some five times against six), still less in the genitive (some nine times against fourteen), least of all in the nominative (two against ten). Consider, moreover, what I have termed as 'distinctness of the sentence': in the vast majority of cases the epithet occurs where no complication of construction and meaning blurs the representation of the simple and self-contained act involving the mention of wine.

Here are indications which point to syntactic preferences. This is surely no matter of chance or of mere metrical necessity. Thus it is significant that the epithet is relatively most frequent in the accusative. For its presence is here connected with the most pertinent syntactic function of the noun: it is in such a function, as object of pouring (or libating, drinking ...) that wine is most visibly relevant to the human eye. It would seem that an important role of the epithet is to underline that concrete syntactic relation which is felt as most germane to a certain noun according to the nature of its meaning. Hence a sense of natural relief in the field of vision.

### 3.

The implications of these general remarks must now be developed and substantiated by looking at the actual instances. It is convenient to order the survey according to case-forms.

#### *Accusative*

The epithet is most significant in such instances as Od. 7.182, 13.53 ὥς φάτο, Ποιτόνοος δὲ μελίφρονα οἶνον ἐκίονα. Lack of epithet would be anomalous. The self-contained central act of pouring requires the epithet. Compare Il. 1.462, 10.579, 16.230, 24.641, Od. 10.356, 15.500, 16.52. "Stood up pouring": Od. 16.14, cp. Il. 11.775, Od. 14.447.

Hence other sets of instances:

"To drink wine" as in Od. 13.8 ὅσσοι ἐνὶ μεγάροισι γερούσιον αἶθοπα οἶνον / αἰεὶ πίνειτ' ἐμοῖσιν cp. Il. 4.259, 5.341, 16.226, Od. 2.57, 9.208, 18.426.

“To bring, give, offer, have wine” as in Od. 13.69 *ἡ δ' ἄλλη σῖτόν τ' ἔφερεν καὶ οἶνον ἐρυνθρόν* cp. 4.622, 16.444, 7.295, 12.19, 19.197, 5.165, Il. 6.264, 8.506, 546.<sup>4</sup>)

What stands out in these instances is, on the one hand, the intrinsic connection between noun and verb (e.g. “to pour, drink wine”) and, on the other, a sense of exposure (e.g. the simple self-contained sentence “he poured, he drank wine”). Such conditions inevitably favour the epithet.

The nature of the matter will be made clearer by looking at the corresponding instances without epithet. It will be seen that the epithet is usually absent when the above-mentioned conditions are not met.

Consider first the lack of intrinsic connection binding the mention of wine to the meaning of the verb or the sentence:

Il. 7.467 *νῆες δ' ἐκ Λήμνοιο παρέστασαν οἶνον ἄγουσαι*. Rightly no epithet, since wine is here a merchandize and not the concrete substance which is poured, drunk, offered. Homer would not use the epithet for “to buy, or to sell, wine”, cp. ib. 471.

Od. 14.95 *οἶνον δὲ φθινύθουσιν ὑπέρβιον ἐξαφύοντες*. Again rightly no epithet. The idea of ‘wasting’ is not intrinsic to the nature of wine; it distracts us from the simple concrete sense of pouring or drawing wine. Compare instances in which the meaning ‘to drink’ is heavily qualified: Od. 14.109 *ὁ δ' ἐνδυκέως κρέα τ' ἔσθιε πῖνε τε οἶνον* / *ἀρπαλέως ἀκέων*, 20.136 *οἶνον μὲν γὰρ πῖνε καθήμενος ὄφρ' ἔθελ' αὐτός*, 1.340 *οἱ δὲ σιωπῇ οἶνον πινόντων*. No epithet here because of the same encroachment: such ideas as ‘greed’, ‘satisfaction’, ‘silence’ displace the intrinsic relevance of wine to the act of drinking; in Od. 6.249 (cp. 14.168) even the mention of wine is left out.<sup>5</sup>)

Consider now the (no less important) lack of epithet due to lack of distinctness or of exposure, comparing corresponding phrases with and without epithet.

Take the meaning “to give, carry . . . wine”, where wine is often coupled with food. We find the epithet in e.g. Od. 12.18f. *ἄμα δ'*

<sup>4</sup>) We may here mention Od. 9.357–358 *φέρει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα/οἶνον ἐριστάφυλον* (cp. ib. 110–111) where again the noun-epithet phrase is fully exposed and (with its sense of ‘fruit’) intrinsic to the meaning of the word ‘to produce’.

<sup>5</sup>) Hence in Od. 9.353–354 *ἦσατο δ' αἰνῶς* / *ἡδὺ ποτὸν πίνων* where the concrete act of drinking is replaced by a sense of enjoyment in the drink. *πίνων αἰθόπα οἶνον* would be unsuitable.

ἀμφίπολοι φέρον αὐτῇ / σῖτον καὶ κρέα πολλὰ καὶ αἶθοπα οἶνον ἐρυθρόν,  
 wine having a distinctness of its own. But there is no epithet in  
 Od. 2.289f. *δπλισσον τ' ἥϊα καὶ ἄγγεσιν ἄρσον ἅπαντα, / οἶνον ἐν ἀμφι-  
 πορεῦσι καὶ ἄλφιστα, μυελὸν ἀνδρῶν . . .* Why no epithet here? Because  
 what stands out is a general provision of which wine is an item:  
 note the neuter collectives *ἥϊα, ἅπαντα, ἄλφιστα*. Cp. Od. 6.77, 3.479  
 (here too the general terms *ἐδωδὴν παντοίην, ὄψα*). So “wine and  
 water” as a collective phrase: Od. 1.110.

Or take the meaning “to pour wine”. It is the vessel which may  
 be in focus and given the epithet, not the wine: Il. 23.219–220,  
 Od. 3.40–41, 472, 20.260–261. Where both wine and vessel have an  
 epithet, there is lingering solemnity as in Il. 11.774–775, 24.284–  
 285, 3.246–247 or a general representational fulness as in Od. 10.  
 356–357.

Equally significant (though in a different sense) is lack of epithet  
 due to heavy subordination or close coordination of the sentence.  
 We thus do not expect the epithet in Il. 9.489 *πρὶν γ' ὅτε δὴ σ' ἐπ'  
 ἐμοῖσιν ἐγὼ γούνεσσι καθίσσας / ὄψον τ' ἄσαιμι προταμῶν καὶ οἶνον  
 ἐπισχών* (contrast Od. 16.444 *ἐπέσχε τε οἶνον ἐρυθρόν*). Other sub-  
 ordinate sentences without epithet: Il. 8.189, Od. 7.163–164. Be-  
 ware of rules, however. We have here delicate questions of focus,  
 degrees of exposure. Thus in Il. 6.266 *Δὺ λείβειν αἶθοπα οἶνον /  
 ἄζομαι* wine, with its epithet, is brought out in central position  
 though in an infinitive sentence, quite unlike Od. 7.164 *κέλευσον /  
 οἶνον ἐπικρῆσαι* where the act of pouring comes as object of a  
 superimposed order. Compare the epithet in Il. 6.258, 4.259, Od.  
 9.208, 12.327—all instances in which a temporal or final clause  
 expands on its own account.

Some instances may appear controversial. Why no epithet in  
 Il. 24.306 *εὔχετ' ἔπειτα στάς μέσῳ ἔρκει, λείβε δὲ οἶνον, / οὐρανὸν  
 εἰσανιδών*? This may be due to the close sequence which has its own  
 emotional and religious focus. Cp. Il. 3.268–270, 295–296 and the  
 ritual in Od. 8.470, 20.250–253.

And there is a question of tone, especially in the imperative. We  
 find the epithet in Il. 14.5 *ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν νῦν πῖνε καθήμενος αἶθοπα  
 οἶνον* where the imagined act lingers and expands in the mind;<sup>6</sup>)  
 but naturally not so in Odysseus' invitation to Polyphemus *τῇ πίε  
 οἶνον* (Od. 9.347) or in Eumaeus' endearing familiarity (Od. 15.391),

<sup>6</sup>) Compare A. Severyns, *Homère, le poète et son œuvre*. Bruxelles 1946,  
 II, p. 59.

or in Circe's commiserating call (Od. 10.460) or in Nestor's hastening order (Od. 3.332). Note in these last examples *ἄγε*, *ἄγετε*: briskness detracts from the objectivity of the picture.

### *Genitive*

What stands out is lack of epithet in the sense "sated, filled with wine": Il. 19.167 *ἀνὴρ οἴνοιο κορεσσάμενος* Od. 14.46, Il. 9.706, cp. 19.161; so "sheds full of wine" (Il. 9.71), "craters, or cup, filled with wine" (Od. 2.431, Il. 8.232, Od. 14.113, Il. 9.224), "tables laden with wine" (Od. 15.334).<sup>7</sup> Equally so in the opposite sense: "longing for, in need of, wine" (Od. 20.378).

Il. 9.491 *οἴνου ἀποβλύζων*: the lack of epithet may be explained through the realistically descriptive verb ('to spirt off') which undermines the wine-image; in Od. 22.11 *ῥοφρα πίλοι οἴνοιο* there is both heavy subordination and cup with epithet in the preceding sentence.

We find, on the other hand, *δέπας μελιηδέος οἶνον* as object of giving to libate (Od. 3.46) or with the implicit sense of giving to drink (Il. 18.545). Compare Il. 4.346, Od. 3.391 where the genitives *οἶνον μελιηδέος*, *οἶνον ἡδυπότοιο* may be taken as partitive objects to pouring, drinking. In such instances the idea of libating, drinking prevails over that of being full. There is analogy with the corresponding instances in the accusative (see above).

Od. 2.340 *ἐν δὲ πίθοι οἴνοιο παλαιοῦ ἡδυπότοιο / ἔστασαν, ἄκρητον θεῖον ποτὸν ἔνδον ἔχοντες*. Exceptionally the epithet is drawn by the sentence into a pointed meaning of excellence. Cp. Od. 15.507.

Od. 9.196–197 *ἄσκὸν ἔχον μέλανος οἴνοιο / ἡδέος* is descriptive of a *particular* wine, with *μέλανος* explaining that it was not diluted with water. Cp. ib. 346, 5.265.

### *Dative*

What stands out is lack of epithet in the meaning "overpowered, distraught by wine": cp. Od. 3.139, 9.454, 516, 19.122, 21.297.

We find, on the other hand, the epithet in Il. 23.237 *κατὰ πνρ-καίῃν σβέσαι' αἶθοπι οἶνω* where the sense of 'pouring wine' is clearly implicit. So ib. 250, 24.791, cp. Od. 10.519, 11.27. A unique deviation in Od. 20.69.

<sup>7</sup>) Compare the phrase *κρητῆρας ἐπεστέφαντο ποτοῖο* (Il. 1.470, 9.175, etc.).

*Nominative*

Most striking is the lack of epithet in this case. Thus in the sense "wine possesses, overpowers the mind": Od. 18.331, 391, 21.295, 9.362, 11.61. Equally so μένος μέγα οἶνος ἀέξει (Il. 6.261). If anything, we find in such an instance an emphatic attribute or predicate: Od. 14.464.

Hence no epithet in any emphatic description or statement displacing the simple actuality of wine: wine wasted away (Od. 23.305), belched out (9.373), dashed to the ground (Il. 3.300), produced in abundance (Od. 13.244). We do have Od. 9.163 οὐ γάρ πω νηῶν ἐξέφθιτο οἶνος ἐρυνθρός, but merely to mark the presence of wine.

Od. 21.293 οἶνός σε τρώει μελιηδής constitutes a new departure, the epithet probably taking a deliberate pointed sense.

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In so highlighting wine as object of acts intrinsic to it (to pour, to drink . . .), the epithet has a *concrete* value; on the other hand, the absence of the epithet results from complications of construction or it points to an *abstract* sense of the noun: wine as a means to an end ('filled with . . .', 'satiated with . . .'). Hence the rarity of the epithet in the nominative (wine as an agency or power). We thus have a wine-image which surfaces wherever it is not impeded by syntactic complications or ulterior meaning.

Such mode of representation leaves room to but few exceptions. Any pointedness of the epithet would undermine it. If Homer gives wine a pointed qualification, he hardly uses an adjective but dramatizes the quality with a verb: e.g. "wine subdues the mind". Qualities are thus inherent in things, and further qualifications are seen as acts, effects, states. Hence adjectives are seldom used in Homer as solitary predicates—we hardly find e.g. "Achilles is strong" any more than "wine is harmful" or "wine is beneficial"

## 4.

The epithet, we have seen, is most at home in self-contained sentences presenting an *intrinsic* connection between noun and verb (e.g. "he poured wine"). How shall we define such intrinsicity? What comes to the fore is the nature of a sentence in so far as it gives to a thing a function which is naturally pertinent to it. For a thing cannot be arbitrarily experienced for

what it is. It comes to us on the spur of occasions which make it familiar, recognizable as such. Sentences which so present it are intrinsic to its nature.

The question now arises; can we establish a syntactic principle broad enough to sustain a general survey of the epithets in Homer?

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We might appeal to certain trends in modern linguistics. W. Porzig<sup>8)</sup> was the first to point out “essential relations of meaning” (*wesenhafte Bedeutungsbeziehungen*)—that is to say, intimate cohesions of meaning between words which belong to different parts of speech. Thus, in the case of verbs and nouns, “to walk” implies “feet”, “to bite” implies “teeth”, “to bloom” implies “plant”, “to bark” implies “dog”, etc. These are but extreme examples. Any word is surrounded by a particular field of force into which only words of a certain kind can be drawn: thus a verb can only govern (or be governed by) certain nouns.

Such relations are not arbitrary. Nor are they due to any association of ideas. They are rooted, rather, in the very meaning of the words which are so connected. Porzig also uses in this respect the term “syntactic fields of meaning”.<sup>9)</sup> Syntax is here to be understood in an ontological sense—as reflection of the bond which inevitably links things to occurrences and viceversa. For any action or state cannot materialize in a vacuum but must have some identifiable point of reference; and, in the same way, things are not abstract entities but one and all with certain functions or features which make them what they are to our senses.

Now this applies to language generally. However expanded a statement may be, what primarily gives it meaning is the basic sense of an “essential relation of meaning”; and this cannot but be expressed in a basic simple sentence. Take one of the sentences cited above—“the flower blooms”. We may complicate it by modifying “flower” or “blooms” (and say for instance “this par-

<sup>8)</sup> ‘Wesenhafte Bedeutungsbeziehungen’, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 58, 1934, p. 70–97; *Das Wunder der Sprache*, Bern 1962, p. 120–127. Porzig refers these ideas to a ‘grammar of contents’, *inhaltbezogene Grammatik*: see *Das Wunder der Sprache*, p. 100, 105. E. Conseriu (‘Lexikalische Solidaritäten’, *Poetica*, 1, 1967, p. 293–303) applies structural classifications to Porzig’s instances.

<sup>9)</sup> *Das Wunder der Sprache*, p. 125.



ticular kind of flower appears to be blooming"), but the inner source of these complications will always lie in the intimate relation which binds the idea of flower with that of blooming.

We may recall the principles of 'transformational grammar'. Compare the notion of 'deep structure'. Beneath any syntactically complicated sentence there lies a simpler one which expresses the same idea in a more fundamental way; and the simpler instance often shows a more concrete and basic connection between noun and verb (or indeed between parts of speech of any kind). The linguist's interest here shifts away from variations or anomalies of construction and turns, rather, to the deep-seated regularities of syntax and their reasons. What stands out are certain universally valid connections which remain what they are in spite of any narrative and discursive sequence. The same phenomenon, in other words, may be viewed both in terms of a basic contents and of syntactic simplicity. Hence we find in Chomsky's work a frequent reference to 'intrinsic connection', 'inherent meaning', 'context-free validity', 'base forms', 'deep object', 'intrinsic semantic content'. Likewise he mentions "contextual features which indicate the range of complements which a morpheme can accept".<sup>10)</sup>

Taking these views into account, let us call 'sentences of intrinsic relation' those sentences which present a most intimate connection between verb and noun. Such are in Homer, for instance, "he poured wine", "he steered the ship", "he sailed the sea", "he came to the house" or, just as well, "Achilles saw, spoke, went ...". The act of 'pouring' is as intrinsic to 'wine' as is that of 'steering', 'sailing over', 'coming' to 'ship', 'sea', 'house'; and similarly the human acts of 'speaking', 'seeing', 'going' are intrinsically pertinent to the man Achilles. We have things on the one hand and actions or states of being on the other, both elements so naturally interrelated as to form one clear meaningful unit of expression quite apart from the requirement of any particular context. This would not be the case in, for instance, "he bought the wine", "he saved the ship", "he feared the sea", "he ransacked the house" or "Achilles was in danger", "Achilles was prevailed upon": in such cases a peculiarity of connection precludes the clear, full, concrete sense of the occasion.

<sup>10)</sup> *Studies on Semantics in Generative Grammar*, The Hague 1972, p. 36. For the concepts here mentioned, cp. ib. p. 45, 54, 56, 57, 63, 65, 66, 74, 86. Compare the term 'kernel sentence' in Z. S. Harris, *Papers in Structural and Transformational Linguistics*, Dordrecht 1970, p. 533-577.

In a 'sentence of intrinsic relation' a thing is thus most likely to be revealed in its essential identity. It naturally stands out in image-making position. And it is here that it is most likely to have an epithet. Homer's style confirms this assumption. The noun-epithet phrases are indeed 'context-free', marking moments or occasions which have their independent consistency: the irrelevance of the epithet to the surrounding narrative proves this basic function. What the epithet achieves is poetically much more important: it arrests a point of syntactic focus conferring to it concrete substance and colour. Here is a basic congruence—so basic that the epithet, far from disrupting it or qualifying it, rather stresses its necessity. Language naturally surveys these 'essential relations of meaning'; and poetry lingers upon them, bringing out existential moments over and above any purely narrative or descriptive sequence.

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But what of our other main reason for the occurrence of the epithets: distinctness, independence of the sentence? How shall we include such a reason in a broad view of syntax which might take into account natural zones of stress and abeyance, quite apart from the construction of principal and subordinate clauses?

A 'localistic' or 'spatial' approach might here be of help. This has been especially applied to the interpretation of case-forms or their equivalents.<sup>11)</sup> But it might be extended to the way sentences are related to one another. Just as the relation between grammatical subject and object may be viewed in terms of extension and inclusion in space, so we may look at a sequence of sentences in terms of relative position and focus. We shall take, again, a concrete view, stressing an actual situation rather than a logical connection.<sup>12)</sup>

<sup>11)</sup> John M. Anderson, *The Grammar of Case, Towards a Localistic Theory*, Cambridge 1971. For a survey of such view of case, see L. Hjelmslev, *La catégorie des cas, étude de grammaire générale*, Aarhus 1935, p. 36–70.

<sup>12)</sup> On the philosophical implications of this view, see E. Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, I, *Sprache*, Berlin 1923, p. 146–166. On representation and juxtaposition, ib. 26–40, especially 29–30, 33–35.

The term 'spatial' is here often equated to 'concrete' as opposed to 'abstract' and viewed as a stage in the progress of language. I rather take a synchronic view, the two modes of thought and expression often being reflected in the same passage.

Such focus and position may coincide with a principal clause, but not necessarily so. Take, for instance, Il. 6.258–262:

ἀλλὰ μὲν', ὄφρα κέ τοι μελιηδέα οἶνον ἐνείκω,  
ὥς σπείσης Διὶ πατρὶ καὶ ἄλλοις ἀθανάτοισιν  
πρῶτον, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τὸς ὀνήσσει, αἷ κε πίησθα.  
ἄνδρ' ὃς κεκμηῶτι μένος μέγα οἶνος ἀέξει

Hector is here told to stay; and the following clause, though grammatically subordinate, takes a predominant position: it is the wine which fills the scene, its offer visually realized through the help of the epithet and not taken as a matter of fact; then follows a strict sequence of cause and effect (*αἷ κε πίησθα* without even the mention of wine), the whole capped by reflection: *μένος μέγα οἶνος ἀέξει*, wherein we naturally find no epithet.

We have two levels of expression—one more immediate and more distant the other. Homer's focus on successive instantaneous moments keeps the field of vision unimpaired, as long as a complication does not occur which (as most often in dialogue) naturally displaces the outright exposure. According to this distinction, we have different modulations of the expressive material, affecting the vocabulary itself. The noun-epithet phrases here play an important role. Thus in Od. 7.182, 13.53 *ὥς φάτο, Ποντόνοος δὲ μελίφρονα οἶνον ἐκίφρα* the perfect juxtaposition quite justifies the noun-epithet phrase; but in both passages, a few lines before, the same idea is expressed otherwise and without epithet as part of a complex order (*κερασσάμενος μέθυ νεῖμον*). Or take Il. 11.780: we find *αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ τάπημεν ἐδητύος ἥδὲ ποτήτος* in a strictly subordinate temporal clause, but *σπένδων αἰθοπα οἶνον* in 775.<sup>13</sup>) It would not be Homeric to say “he poured a drink” or “when they had drunk their wine”.

<sup>13</sup>) *ποτής* and *πόσις* (Il. 1.469, etc.) mostly occur in sentences of this type. *ποτόν* = wine specifies the content of a vessel (Od. 2.341, 9.205, 348, cp. n. 7) or describes drink as complement to food (Il. 11.630), or emphasizes it as a delicacy (Od. 9.354, cp. n. 5)—instances in which wine is a theme of description rather than the substance which is actually drunk, poured, etc.

As for *μέθυ*, we may relate its poverty of epithets to the fact that we never find the word to render the central single act of a person's drinking, pouring . . . wine; it rather points to a quantity of wine or to a general provision (Od. 4.746, Il. 9.469, etc.).